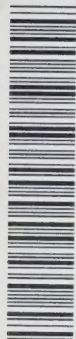


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The way to Habitat

da. *Ministry of State [for] Urban Affairs.*  
*[Statements and speeches]*



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Background of a speech  
by the Honourable Barney Danson  
Minister of State for Urban Affairs  
at the National Joint Conference of the  
American Society of Planning Officials  
and the Community Planning Association of Canada  
Vancouver, April 15, 1975




Ministry of State

Ministère d'État

Urban Affairs  
Canada

Affaires urbaines  
Canada



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1. THE NECESSITY FOR HABITAT

Prime Minister Trudeau, speaking in London last month, referred to the absolute necessity for an equitable worldwide distribution of resources and opportunities.

The theme of this conference, "Sharing space from neighbourhood to continent," is, I think, consistent with that principle and is an excellent example of the concern groups like yours show for the problems of human settlements. It is indicative too of your conviction that the problems of human settlements are not limited by national or other political boundaries. Instead, they are worldwide. Although it is obvious that the specific problems may vary from country to country or from city to city throughout the world, the necessity for solutions remains the same.

As you know, a little more than one year from now, the United Nations conference on human settlements will open in this city. Before I get into the details of the conference and the results we expect to flow from it, I would like to tell you why I am convinced Habitat is so very important.

Habitat could well be one of the most important conferences the United Nations has ever held. The problem of human settlements is, I believe, one of the most compelling facing the human community. Habitat is dedicated to the need

for practical solutions to that problem. The conference is important too because it offers another opportunity for co-operation at the international level as well as involvement of other internal levels of government. Finally, and perhaps even more importantly, Habitat will point out just how serious the urban predicament is to people all over the world.

## 2. HUMAN SETTLEMENTS - A GLOBAL CRISIS

I often think that people have become almost **used** to crises of one kind or another. We seem to have a new one somewhere in the world every day. I think it is also true today that changes often seem to come upon us so quickly that they threaten to overwhelm us before we can successfully define their nature. I believe we have reached the crisis point in human settlements and, as a result, we have a significant challenge before us both as governments and individual members of the world community. The human settlement is, after all, the primary environment of the individual and changes in that environment can be expected to have a profound effect on all of us. Habitat is a first step towards the definition of the problem, the exploration of solutions and, to a certain extent, their implementation.

Still, there is no doubt that the problem is a major one. Within thirty years, the terms of reference and, in many ways, the character of the human race will have changed. Man will be living for the first time on a predominantly urban planet. If our demographic projections prove correct, three and a half billion of



the world's citizens - out of a likely  $6\frac{1}{2}$  billion - will be in settlements of more than 20,000 people in the year 2000. These settlements will be growing at twice the overall rate of population growth. The cities of over 2 to 3 million may well be growing twice as fast again. The dimensions of such growth are astounding. Dealing with this problem - and it is a very serious problem - will, on only one level, involve constructing, in the next quarter century, more buildings of all kinds than have been built before in the whole history of man. But such dynamic growth will be coupled with a multitude of other serious considerations. For example, the majority of these new settlements will not be in the rich, settled societies. They will be in the poorer, still developing lands where the resources available for construction on such a scale are grossly and pitifully inadequate.

The issues before us are urgent and basic to our future on this planet. We have only a short time before the scale of the problem and the speed with which it is developing prevent us from using adequate planning and foresight.

We are all aware, I think, of cities built by chance and pressure - cities failing to give to many of their people a decent life. At this phase of development, the world may well be doubly unfortunate. While the cities in more developed lands, by triumphant innovations in sanitary engineering, over a century ago overcame some of the worst environmental horrors - filth and epidemics and waterborne disease - our twentieth century rapacity

for goods and energy has overloaded these earlier triumphs with mountains of garbage and the heavy pall of emissions from the internal combustion engine. The rich cities no longer die of cholera. But lung cancer and emphysema move in. The streets are no longer open sewers. But cars block them. Mountains of solid wastes pile up on the land and chemical effluents seep into the rivers and oceans. We have as yet virtually no really satisfactory urban models, even among the rich lands which have the resources to produce them.

But what about cities in the developing world without the necessary resources? There the environmental evils of poor water, absence of sewage and spreading slums are coupled with the 20th century evils of smog and fumes and chemical pollution. Such centres, unchanged and deteriorating over another two decades, offer us the tragic prospect of providing the very worst environment in which human beings have ever been brought up. I do not think it is possible for us to allow ourselves to slide carelessly into urban conditions detrimental to human life and the human environment.

### 3. THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Some of you may recall that, at the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, human settlements occupied a major place on the agenda. I think there can be no doubt that the Stockholm Conference was both important and successful; the prospects for worldwide monitoring, management and conservation of the environment are far better now than when preparations for Stockholm began. But



I think it is also true that the discussion of human settlements at Stockholm was one of the least satisfactory parts of the Conference, for two reasons that I shall come to in a moment. Canada recognized that this was likely to be the case some months before the Conference was held, and therefore proposed at Stockholm that a special conference, Habitat, should be convened by the United Nations to deal specifically with human settlements issues, even though our settlements are a part of the human environment.

The first reason why human settlements could not be dealt with at Stockholm as successfully as other agenda items is simply that the subject is too big. I need not labour this point: it will be obvious to this professional audience and probably to almost everyone that the problems of urban growth, of rural-urban migration, of the provision of adequate shelter, services, and so on are simply too vast and too important to be handled adequately as one element of a conference on wider environmental problems.

The second reason why human settlements did not fit easily into the Stockholm Conference is less obvious, but it is also very important, because it affects a great deal of our preparations for Habitat. The emphasis at Stockholm was on reaching international agreement about those environmental problems that could only be tackled effectively by international agreement and action. This includes worldwide monitoring, control of atmospheric and marine pollutants and so on. As I have said, it was very successful in that regard.

But human settlement problems are not like that. Sure, every country in the world has such problems, and it is also true that the problems have many similarities from one country to another. Whether we live in a western-style country, a socialist economy or the Third World, whether we live in a developing country, or one that is highly industrialized, many - though not all - of the problems are the same. What is different, however, is that most of the really vital actions needed to solve these problems will have to be taken on a national, rather than an international basis. If we want to reduce marine pollution, we have to have international agreement on standards and on how to enforce them. If we want to tackle the problems of rapid urban growth, of squatter settlements or the lack of social and economic opportunity in rural areas, we must do so primarily as individual nations.

#### 4. HABITAT - AN OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE

This does not mean that there is no point in an international conference on human settlements. As I said, the problems are worldwide and have much in common with one another. There are also some things that do require international action if they are to be done effectively. What it does mean, however, is that in preparing for Vancouver, and in the Habitat Conference itself, we must be taking a rather different approach, and seeking different sorts of results, from what we did at Stockholm.



We must be much more concerned with identifying the action that needs to be taken at the national level - by federal, provincial, state or local governments, by non-governmental organizations and by individuals - and we must also ensure that there is the widest possible exchange of information and experience among nations about those problems that are found throughout the world. The principal tests of the success of Habitat will not be the number of international agreements on human settlements that result; rather it will be the extent to which individual nations take new or expanded action to tackle the urgent human settlement problems within their border. Another test will be the extent to which they are helped in this by the experience of others which is made available to them via Habitat.

If Habitat is to be a success in achieving international action on global needs, I believe it should achieve fairly clear results in the following four areas at least.

It is our feeling that Habitat should have a number of clear and important program results. These could include, perhaps, a decision to have an on-going United Nations Human Settlements demonstration program. In the next quarter century, the developed nations will have to create twice as much urban area as they have in their entire history. In the developing nations, the need is even greater. In the next 25 years, they will have to create four times as many human settlements as they have had. I believe that if a concrete program for the exchange of information and ideas on human settlements were established, it

would be of tremendous benefit not only to Canada and other developed nations but also to those nations where urban problems are of the greatest concern.

Another area where Habitat should have important results is in the education and research field. One action in this area might be a decision to strengthen a number of regional urban management training institutes. There is an acknowledged need to better the competence of urban management throughout the world both in the developed and developing nations. In Canada, we have already begun one such program. But I think it is essential to the future of human settlements that nations develop and train leaders and officials who can grapple with the task of managing the huge cities that are an inevitable part of our future.

There is another potential result of the conference. The General Assembly, in its resolution launching Habitat, has requested that the Conference should have a "financial" and an "institutional" result. In our view, this is very important. In our view, too, any recommendations in this area, to be meaningful, will require the most careful consideration and must carry the broadest possible measure of support from governments.

Finally, it would seem desirable that Habitat should lead to a firm Declaration of Principles which would have three basic characteristics. It should recognize the fact that human settlement is one of the critical issues of mankind; it should



therefore speak clearly to the people of the world in language that is universally understood. Secondly, it must recognize the diversity and complexity of human settlements and it should identify the main areas of action and the political and scientific resources that need to be marshalled. Thirdly, it should re-present a commitment by governments to tackle human settlements issues with the resources and urgency that are required. I realize that this is a tall order. But this is what Habitat is all about, and in developing and refining such a Declaration of Principles, it seems inevitable that our understanding of human settlements issues, and the commitment by our governments to their resolution, will be strengthened.

## 5. PREPARING FOR HABITAT

### (A) International Preparations

So much for the overall philosophy; now some words about the process of preparing for Habitat, internationally and in Canada. We have come a long way since Canada's proposal for such a Conference was approved by the Stockholm Conference in June 1972 and endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly the following December. We have come a long way from the Seminar of Experts that was convened here in Vancouver by the United Nations in May 1973 to get preparations for Habitat underway. Out of that meeting came, among other things, the short book by Barbara Ward entitled Human Settlements: Crisis and Opportunity. That book, published by the Canadian Government, is now available in a revised edition and I would like to agree with Maurice Strong

when he says in the preface that "this text remains unexcelled as a philosophical framework for the (Habitat) Conference."

One of the most important steps on the road to Habitat was the appointment of Mr. Enrique Penalosa as Secretary-General of the Habitat Secretariat in the United Nations that is charged with overall responsibility for Habitat preparations. Since taking up his appointment Mr. Penalosa has been a tireless worker, and almost a continuous traveller on behalf of Habitat. At last count he had visited a great many of the participating governments, impressing them, as he impressed us, with the importance of his mission and with his own dedication to it.

This message of importance and urgency bore fruit at the first formal meeting of the 56-nation Preparatory Committee appointed by the General Assembly to assist Mr. Penalosa and his Secretariat in preparing for Habitat. At United Nations headquarters in New York last January it was evident that almost all the nations represented had sent very strong and important delegations to the Preparatory Committee. This meant that the Committee rapidly focussed on substantive issues and reached a high degree of consensus on the way future preparations should go. I shall come back later on to some of the results of this important meeting.

At the international level we are now locked into a very tight schedule of preparations that takes us up to May 31 next year when Habitat begins. I do not use the phrase "locked in" to imply that we - or any other country - are prisoners of this preparatory process. Rather there has been established a series



of fixed points in the preparatory process that will guide Canada and other countries so that we know what is expected of us and when. Let me run quickly through some of the key elements in this international timetable.

- Last month Canada notified the United Nations Habitat Secretariat of its willingness to provide, in audio-visual form at Habitat, presentations of Canadian experience on four specific themes. I will come back to these themes in a moment. We expect the UN Secretariat to reply shortly indicating which of these themes it wishes us to proceed with: since there may be as many as 130 nations at Habitat, it is expected that each country will be limited to a maximum of three such presentations.

- At the end of March, Canada similarly submitted to the UN Secretariat a preliminary outline of our national report on human settlements. This is similar to the national reports submitted by nations at Stockholm. This first outline is intended primarily to assist the UN Secretariat in identifying the issues of most concerns to different countries. In Canada we expect that this outline will be considerably altered and improved, as a result of discussions within the federal government, with provincial governments and as a result of input from non-governmental organizations and individuals. The final revision of the national report is due to be submitted to the UN at the end of 1975; it is my intention that Canada's national report on human settlements should be published and distributed widely in Canada and abroad.

- The 56-nation Preparatory Committee will reconvene in August, will hold another formal meeting in January 1976, and a final meeting in May 1976. This last meeting will take place in Vancouver, immediately before the Habitat Conference itself.

- In a few days' time, the Governing Council of the UN Environmental Programme will be meeting in Nairobi. Both the USA and Canada are members of this Governing Council and Habitat itself forms part of the UN's Environmental Programme. This meeting in Nairobi will be of particular importance in ensuring that developing countries are provided with assistance in bringing their problems and experience to Vancouver in audio-visual form.

- The next session of the UN General Assembly, which opens in the fall, must approve the overall plans for the Conference, including its agenda. This, in turn, means that the August meeting of the 56-nation preparatory committee must agree on the advice it wishes to give to the Secretariat on Conference arrangements.

- Following, as in so many other ways, the precedents established by preparations for Stockholm, special regional preparatory meetings at governmental level are being arranged, under the aegis of the UN Regional Economic Commission. The USA and Canada are members of both the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Economic Commission for Europe and will hence be involved in the meetings in Caracas, Helsinki and Geneva this summer. As Host country, Canada may also be asked to participate in the other regional meetings, in order to describe the arrangements that are being made in Vancouver.



- As the main areas of international concern emerge from these meetings, and are expressed in the preliminary national reports, it is expected that intergovernmental working groups of experts will be convened by the UN Habitat Secretariat, so that discussion and negotiation on these issues can take place, and so that when we meet formally in Vancouver, a substantial measure of agreement may already have been reached. Such groups are likely to be of particular importance for those problems of human settlements that require international, rather than national, action.

- At the end of 1975, as well as the final version of the national reports, Canada and other countries will be sending to the UN their completed audio-visual presentations, so that extracts can be prepared for use, in the official UN language, during the Habitat Conference itself.

These are some of the main fixed points at the international scale. I have described them in some detail - although I have not exhausted the list - because I think it is important to emphasize just how vital this preparatory process is. What we achieve during two weeks in Vancouver next year will depend almost entirely on how well we use the time and the opportunities available to prepare for Vancouver.

(B) Canadian Preparations

Let me now, therefore, turn to a similar description of the preparations that are going on within Canada: what the UN would term "at the national level," though in fact these preparations

include all levels of government, non-governmental organizations and the individual.

I should explain, especially to those who are not Canadians, that our preparations are of two kinds: those that arise from Canada's role as Host country for the Conference, and those that relate to Canadian participation in the Conference as a member of the United Nations, and as a country that is deeply concerned about settlement problems. I shall not describe the work of the Canadian Host Secretariat, housed within the Department of External Affairs, except to say that the Secretariat, and my colleague the Secretary of State for External Affairs, are confident that the facilities provided the delegates will be more than adequate, by the high standards of Stockholm and other similar events in recent years. The province of British Columbia and the City of Vancouver are also determined to ensure that the delegates and other visitors to Habitat receive an enthusiastic and memorable welcome to this City.

So far as Canadian participation in Habitat is concerned, this is being coordinated by a Canadian Participation Secretariat, housed in my own Ministry of State for Urban Affairs. It brings together the work of an interdepartmental task force of several departments at the federal level, and of a federal/provincial committee on which all provincial governments are represented. The work of these groups, for example, was vital in ensuring that Canada went to the first meeting of the 56-nation preparatory Committee well prepared. The Canadian Participation



Secretariat also provides support for the Canadian National Committee, a group of men and women under the chairmanship of Senator Buckwold that I have appointed to provide me with a channel for advice from non-governmental organizations and from individual Canadians.

Before I come to the matter of non-governmental contributions to Habitat preparations, let me make it clear that Habitat is primarily a conference of governments. Habitat is primarily an occasion when the member nations of the UN gather to discuss and to negotiate on a governmental level about a matter in which their present and future actions are of great importance for their own people and for people in other countries. Only governments can make this kind of commitment.

## 6. HABITAT FORUM

At the same time as the official Habitat Conference takes place, there will be a separate meeting of non-governmental organizations and individuals from around the world, also meeting in Vancouver, under the title of "Habitat Forum." This system of a "parallel conference" again follows the precedent of the Environmental Forum in Stockholm, Population Tribune in Bucharest and others. This Habitat Forum is being planned by a group based at The Hague, Netherlands, and the Canadian Government is providing financial assistance towards the costs of providing conference facilities and preliminary planning, through a specially-created group in Vancouver called ACSOHS: The Association in Canada Serving

Organizations for Human Settlements. We are doing what we can to ensure that Habitat Forum, like Habitat, is a success. Like other countries, we hope that what happens at Habitat Forum will influence Habitat, and vice versa. But I would like to stress that, in my view, it would be a mistake for non-governmental organizations, in Canada or elsewhere, to focus all their energies on Habitat Forum, and on their hopes for Habitat Forum as the link between non-governmental organizations and official government positions. Simply because of the long and complex series of preparations that are at present under way for Habitat, it will be very difficult for Habitat Forum to exert the influence on the official Conference that most people here today would like to see.

I am emphasizing all this now, more than a year before Habitat and Habitat Forum, because I want to ensure that non-governmental organizations such as ASPO or CPAC do not focus all their preparations, their timetables and their hopes on Habitat Forum. The Canadian Government, and no doubt other governments around the world, want to incorporate advice from NGO's and individuals into what happens at the official Conference, but if you wait until next May you are likely to be too late to have the influence that you should. Contribute now and in the months ahead to the preparations that are going on in Canada, in the United States and in other countries. If it happens that you feel your message is not being heard, then you still have the opportunity provided by Habitat Forum. Surely it would be better if Habitat Forum were to look beyond Habitat: to ask, in the context of human settlements, "what next?"



## 7. INDIVIDUAL INVOLVEMENT IN HABITAT

At this point you may be asking what ways exist for you to influence the Habitat preparations process. There are, I think, four ways. I am naturally addressing myself here primarily to Canadians in the context of our national preparations.

- First, as individuals or groups, you can tell us directly. Write to me as Minister of State for Urban Affairs, or write to the Canadian Participation Secretariat in the Ministry. We may not agree with you; we may already be working on the same idea; or your suggestions may be inappropriate for Habitat, as international plans for it become clearer. But if we do not hear from you, we will never know.

- Second, the Canadian National Committee is arranging a series of public hearings across Canada later this year. They are specifically intended to provide occasions for individuals, community groups and similar organizations to say what they feel is most important and urgent. If Senator Buckwold and his colleagues hear a message once or twice, it may or may not have an influence. If they hear it being repeated in various ways across the country, you may be sure that it will influence Canadian preparations for Habitat in some way.

- Third, and perhaps of particular significance to groups such as ASPO and CPAC, the Canadian Participation Secretariat will be holding a series of symposia across Canada on the principal Habitat themes and on the major human settlement issues that exist in Canada. Details of these symposia, and of other Habitat

preparations, will be found in the new issue of our Habitat Bulletin which is available at this conference. These symposia are deliberately intended as opportunities for specialists and relevant organizations to contribute well thought-out position papers or oral discussions to specific matters that are important to Habitat, to the governments of Canada at all levels, and, we believe, are important also to you.

Before leaving the question of symposia, I should mention also that the Canadian National Committee is sponsoring a national conference of non-governmental organizations concerned with human settlements issues. This will take place in Ottawa in October/November of this year, and follows a similar preliminary meeting of those organizations last November. As well as providing assistance to enable these conferences to take place, the Canadian Participation Secretariat is also helping an ad hoc group of NGO's in Canada to coordinate the development and receipt of submissions by groups such as the CPAC and ASPO.

- Lastly, and in a much broader context, you can contribute to Habitat by getting something done in the field of human settlements. As I said earlier, we all recognize that although human settlements problems are worldwide and have many features in common, the main action has got to be taken within countries, and we do not need to wait for Habitat to get on with it. Whether you act as part of a governmental agency, the occasion of Habitat can and should be the occasion when things happen.



What I am suggesting here, I suppose, is something like what we all did eight years ago during Centennial Year. The Americans in my audience may remember Expo, but they may not have known that someone in Canada had the bright idea of suggesting that we each adopt a personal or a community centennial project. For the record, my own project was rather less enterprising than one town in Alberta which constructed a civic landing pad for flying saucers, or the community in Saskatchewan which installed a town sewage system and celebrated the event by a communal bonfire of biffies. We need Habitat projects in 1975 and 1976 and if Americans want to do the same thing, they can combine Habitat with the Bicentennial in the same human settlement project.

#### 8. THE CANADIAN URBAN DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS PROGRAM

I may have sounded rather light-hearted about Habitat and the way that you can influence preparations for it. I am in fact very serious about each of the ways of making your contribution that I have suggested. This, I think, can be amply proved by the importance that I and the federal government attach to the Canadian Urban Demonstration Projects program. This is a major element in our preparations for Habitat, one that, like my suggestion of Habitat projects, will have quick and tangible results, and one that will continue to exert an influence for several years after Habitat.

For the benefit of Americans and other non-Canadians in my audience, I should explain that the Canadian Urban

Demonstration Projects program was directly based on the fact that a main objective of Habitat is to share information and advice about solutions to human settlements problems throughout the world. That information needs to be made available more widely in Canada as well. The program therefore, offers financial help to assist innovative and practical solutions to human settlements problems in Canada. The projects must meet several criteria, including the requirement that the solution be transferable to similar situations elsewhere in the country. They must also be demonstrations of practical solutions; assistance is not intended for the pilot or experimental phase. Assistance is provided in part from existing federal government programs, especially those in the R and D field, partly from funding of \$100 million. The program is at present intended to run for five years from the first of this month.

Since the program was announced, my Ministry has received a large number of proposals for such projects. They have come from all parts of Canada and include both "hardware" and "software". Some of them seem to be particularly well-suited for inclusion in Canadian audio-visual presentations at Habitat, and these have naturally received priority consideration by the Ministry and by the independent advisory panel appointed to review the projects. I am now in a position to announce a first list of 14 projects that have been approved for inclusion in the program;

They are:

- . AN ARK FOR PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND, proposed by the Govt. of P.E.I. and the New Alchemy Institute of P.E.I.



- . LAND REGISTRATION & INFORMATION SERVICE (LRIS), proposed by the Council of Maritime Premiers.
- . APPROPRIATE ENERGY AND BUILDING SYSTEMS FOR HOUSING QUEBEC INDIAN COMMUNITIES, proposed by Professor Brian McCloskey, School of Architecture, McGill University, and Tom Lawand, Director of Field Operations at the Brace Research Institute, MacDonald College, Montreal.
- . MIRABEL, a proposal from the Province of Quebec, demonstrates how this new international airport near Montreal was planned to fit physically, administratively and economically with the environment.
- . PROVIDENT HOUSE is a proposal by Toronto architect John R. Hix and Professor F.C. Hooper of the University of Toronto to build a solar-heated, single-family house that will demonstrate the feasibility of year-round 100-per cent solar space heating.
- . SOLAR HOUSE is another solar-heating proposal, from Toronto architects Douglas H. Lee and Doug Lorriman, and Professor Blair T. Fergusson of Ryerson Polytechnical Institute.
- . A SOLAR HEATING SYSTEM FOR THE PRESENT, proposed by Gregory Allen, a builder, designer and engineer from Stella, Ontario.
- . LEAF RAPIDS, Manitoba, is a new town created by the provincial government between 1971 and 1974 for workers

at the new Ruttan Lake copper-zinc mine east of the townsite on the Churchill River.

- . THE STAY OPTION, also a project of the Manitoba Government, is a long-term policy which addresses the problem of forced migration of persons from rural areas of the province to larger centers as a result of inadequate economic opportunity and social services.
- . THE CONSTANT MODULE, proposed by Trebron Holdings Ltd., Montreal and Regina. This is a proposal for a uniquely designed bulk cargo container that can be used to store and transport wheat, potash, and other commodities.
- . THE BLOOD TRIBE 1964-1974 -- A PROJECT FOR INNOVATION AND CHANGE, proposed by Head Chief Jim Shot-Both-Sides, Blood Tribal Council, Alberta. This is a proposal to evaluate a 10-year program that was designed to revitalize the Blood Indian Reserve socially, culturally, economically and politically.
- . TURN DOWN TRAFFIC VOLUME, proposed by the City of Vancouver, is a project to increase the capacity of the city's downtown transportation facilities by 40 per cent through computer-matched car pools, publicity aimed at car drivers, and flexible working hours to reduce peak demands.
- . PACKAGE RESERVOIR SYSTEMS is a proposal by Columbia Covers and Liners Ltd. of Vancouver to develop a low-cost alternative to standard reinforced concrete reservoirs.



- . THE LIVABLE REGION PROGRAM demonstrates a process, developed and implemented over a four-year period by the Greater Vancouver Regional District, to identify the concerns and objectives of the regional community and to produce policies for the management of future growth of the region, consistent with these concerns.

Further announcements of successful projects will be made as rapidly as our advisors and assessors can review the projects and establish that they meet the various criteria. Let me take this opportunity of congratulating the sponsors of the approved projects, and of expressing the hope that those who have been unsuccessful will maintain their concern for innovative solutions; the program has several years to run and we are ready at all times to receive new proposals.

At the same time, we in Canada expect to benefit greatly from the demonstrated experience of other countries in dealing with settlements problems. In our preparatory work so far, we have already identified a large number of areas in which we feel that Canada can benefit from experience elsewhere in the world.

Like many other countries, Canada is experiencing rapid concentration of population in a few large metropolitan areas. Our cities are growing rapidly, and in general it is the largest centres where the growth is most rapid. What are the prospects for success of policies and programs to achieve a more balanced distribution of growth among centres of different size?

The other side of the same coin is the continuing trend towards rural depopulation, making the provision of rural services and the improvement of rural living standards difficult.

As our urban areas expand, and as the expectations that our urban populations have of their governments also increase, there is a continuing need to overhaul, or even replace, the machinery of urban government. Various countries, with a wide range of economic and administrative systems, have been introducing such innovations, and we would like to hear of their effectiveness.

To accommodate Canadian urban growth and relieve pressure on existing large cities, we are establishing several new communities. We know that many countries have recent and extensive experience in creating such communities, and we want to profit from their experience.

Despite the immense land areas of Canada, the area of habitable and productive land is relatively small, and competition among conflicting uses is becoming very acute. We need a national land use policy, and effective means to implement it. We hope to benefit from the experience of other countries with similar problems.

In these areas, and others, we are looking forward to learning from other countries.

## 9. HABITAT: THE BENEFITS FOR CANADA

Nevertheless, even if you are impressed by the complexity and sincerity of this preparatory process, you may perhaps still be inclined to ask "so what? What are we likely to get from Habitat that we would not have got if Canada had never



suggested it be held in the first place?" Let me make it clear, before answering, that Canada, at this stage, has no firm view on this as yet. But naturally, there are hopes that we do have.

At the international level, for example, I believe it is essential for the various participating governments to recognize that most of the forces governing both the distribution of human settlements around the world as well as their rates of growth are subject to influence or control mainly at the national or sub-national level.

The same is true of the forces that govern the form and quality of life in our cities and other human settlements. Basically, such a recognition implies that the range of possible international actions as a result of Habitat are limited in the field of human settlements. The question of human settlements is not really analogous to other questions such as trade where concerted international action can have a profound effect. In human settlement governments are not dealing with a great many tangibles that can be influenced or regulated. They are dealing primarily with people and their attitudes and aspirations. Still, I think it is fair to say that action in the more tangible areas, like energy or the management of resources, can help nations solve some of their human settlements problems.

At the national level in Canada, I can see several things emerging that will benefit immensely from the impetus provided by Habitat. They include our present debate on the best target for Canada's future population, its distribution across the country and between rural and urban areas, on the balance between

large metropolises and small and medium-sized towns. I see a growing concern for urban and regional planning, especially planning that seeks to build a future as well as to control the present and correct the past. I see a growing recognition of the importance of land, and wise land use, in a country where land has until recently seemed as available as air.

Perhaps most of all, I sense a growing and wide-spread recognition that most human settlements problems are interrelated and must be tackled comprehensively: that rural decline and metropolitan congestion stem from the same undesirable causes, that transportation cannot be provided without regard for housing, employment or the quality of the environment; that federal, provincial and local governments cannot take action in Canadian cities as if the others did not exist.

Habitat, I believe, can and must help these emerging perceptions become firmly established in our attitudes, our laws and our institutions, so that we build better in the future than we did in the past.

The success of Habitat can best be judged in 1980 or even later. Only then will we be able to look back and decide if Habitat made some significant and permanent changes in the way we deal with human settlements issues. I believe it will succeed.





